

CLAIMS:

1. A device for slicing a fruit or vegetable in a helical shape, which device includes:

a frame;

a chuck which is connected or connectable to the frame, the chuck being rotatable relative to the frame about an axis of rotation and the chuck including a skewer holder for holding a skewer such that the skewer is more or less co-axial with the axis of rotation;

a keying means for rotationally keying to the chuck a fruit or vegetable on a skewer held by the skewer holder, so that the fruit or vegetable is rotatable with the chuck about the axis of rotation;

a blade member which is mounted on the frame for linear displacement in a direction parallel to the axis of rotation, the blade member having a cutting edge which extends more or less radially relative to the axis of rotation and the blade member being anchored against rotation relative to the frame,

the blade member being shaped to abut a fruit or vegetable held on the chuck by the skewer, but to permit a part of the skewer to pass through the blade member, so that synchronous rotation and the chuck and linear displacement of the blade member results in helical slicing of a fruit or vegetable held on the chuck.

2. A device as claimed in claim 1, in which the blade member extends transversely to the axis of rotation of the chuck and includes a centring aperture which is co-axial with the axis of rotation, the centring aperture being configured for receiving a

skewer held on the chuck, to ensure that the skewer is co-axial with the chuck's axis of rotation.

3. A device as claimed in claim 2, in which the frame is a tubular element having a hollow interior and open ends, the blade member being mounted or mountable in the hollow interior of the tubular element to extend transversely to a longitudinal axis of the tubular element, the blade member substantially closing off the hollow interior of the frame, to separate the interior of the frame into two compartments.
4. A device as claimed in claim 3, in which the blade member is a part-helical disc-shaped element in which the cutting edge is spaced from an adjacent edge of the element to define a cutting gap through which a cut portion of a fruit or vegetable can pass in response to rotation of the fruit or vegetable.
5. A device as claimed in claim 3 or claim 4, in which the blade member is mounted on a carriage which is longitudinally slidable along the interior of the frame, the device including an urging means for urging the carriage towards the chuck.
6. A device as claimed in claim 5, in which the urging means includes a spring means which acts between the frame and the carriage.
7. A device as claimed in claim 5 or claim 6, in which the carriage has a circumferentially spaced series of axially extending radially outwardly projecting splines for reception in complementary axially extending grooves in a radially inner wall of the

frame, to permit sliding displacement of the carriage along the frame while keying the carriage to the frame.

8. A device as claimed in any one of claims 5 to 7 inclusive, in which the blade member is removably and replaceably mounted on the carriage.

9. A device as claimed in claim 8, in which the carriage includes a locking member for holding the blade member in position on the carriage, the locking member being arranged for snap fit connection.

10. A device as claimed in any one of claims 3 to 9 inclusive, in which the chuck is provided on a removable closure member for reception on an upper end of the frame, the chuck projecting into the hollow interior of the frame and the device including a crank handle provided on an upper side of the closure member for manual operation, to rotate the chuck.

11. A device as claimed in claim 10, which includes a locking arrangement for locking the closure member to the upper end of the frame, to anchor the closure member against longitudinal displacement relative to the frame.

12. A device as claimed in any one of claims 3 to 11 inclusive, in which the tubular body of the frame is of a substantially transparent polymeric plastics material.

13. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the skewer holder comprises an elongated blind bore defined by the chuck, the bore being co-axial with the axis of rotation of the chuck.
14. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the keying means for keying a fruit or vegetable to the chuck comprises at least one keying protrusion which is fast with the chuck and projects axially from the chuck towards the interior of the frame for piercing a fruit or vegetable on a skewer held by the chuck.
15. A method of cutting a fruit or a vegetable in a helical shape, which method includes:
- skewering the fruit or vegetable by passing a skewer through the fruit or vegetable;
 - mounting the skewer on a rotatable chuck of a cutting device such that the skewer is co-axial with an axis of rotation of the chuck, and passing a free end of the skewer, remote from the chuck, through a centring aperture in a blade member of the device, an end of the fruit or vegetable remote from the chuck bearing against the blade member;
 - keying the fruit or vegetable to the chuck for rotation therewith;
 - rotating the fruit or vegetable and the skewer in a cutting direction by rotating the chuck, so that the fruit or vegetable engages a cutting edge provided by the blade member; and
 - displacing the blade member towards the chuck during rotation of the chuck, the blade member being keyed against rotation about the axis of rotation, so that the fruit or

vegetable is screwed through the blade member as the blade member moves upwards, the skewer passing through the blade member with the fruit or vegetable.

16. A method as claimed in claim 15, which includes removing the skewer, and therefore a helically cut part of the fruit or vegetable which is connected to the skewer, from the device by disengaging the skewer from the chuck.

17. A method as claimed in claim 16, in which the skewer and the helically cut part of the fruit or vegetable is removed from an end of a tubular body of the device opposite to an end of the device at which the chuck is located.

18. A method as claimed in claim 15, claim 16, or claim 17, which includes urging the blade member towards the chuck by a spring means which acts between the blade member and the frame.